

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A calibration device comprising:
 - a module configured to perform a testing or calibration procedure on a component such that a set of calibration data is generated;
 - a file configured to receive the calibration data from the module; and
 - a data filter that transfers the contents of the file to an external storage source in response to predetermined criteria.
2. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the module further includes:
 - a hardware device that performs the testing or calibration procedure on the component; and
 - a software module that interfaces with the hardware device to generate the set of calibration data relating to the response of the component to the testing or calibration procedure performed by the hardware device.
3. The calibration device of claim 2, wherein the software module further includes:
 - at least two different versions of calibration software that perform different calibration procedures and generate data in different formats; and
 - a table correlating each of the different types of components that can be calibrated with the calibration device to a particular version of the calibration software.

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4. The calibration device of claim 2, wherein the component is inserted into the hardware device by an operator.

5. The calibration device of claim 2, wherein the software and hardware device further include means for receiving a message from an external source and displaying the message in a visual format for an operator to view.

6. The calibration device of claim 1, further comprising an archive storage device at which the data filter periodically archives the calibration data.

7. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the file is a flat file that temporarily stores the original calibration data before it is transferred to the data filter.

8. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the file is a circular buffer that temporarily stores the original calibration data before it is transferred to the data filter.

9. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the data filter is an intelligent agent device.

10. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the data filter identifies errors in the calibration data resulting from an operator manually skipping a crucial calibration procedure.

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11. The calibration device of claim 1, wherein the data filter transfers the contents of the file to a database in response to predetermined criteria, and wherein the database can be accessed by any device within a distributed network. Note: claim 11 depends from claim 1, which doesn't mention a "distributed network"

12. The calibration device of claim 11, wherein the distributed network further includes a global network, and wherein the global network includes at least one computer device located in a remote location from the calibration device.

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13. A distributed network comprising:

one or more calibration devices configured to generate calibration data about components;

a database that is accessible by any device within the distributed network regardless of location, wherein the database contains calibration data from the one or more calibration devices; and

a global network of computer devices that monitor the data within the database.

14. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein the global network is configured to directly transmit and receive data with the one or more calibration devices.

15. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein a computer device within the global network is capable of transmitting data to the one or more calibration devices.

16. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein the one or more calibration devices are capable of receiving data from a computer device within the global network and displaying the data in an alphanumeric format to be viewed by an operator.

17. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein the database is a Datasweep database that provides access to all of the calibration data to any device within the distributed network..

18. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein the global network identifies errors in the calibration data and directly transmits instructions to a particular calibration device for an operator of that calibration device to follow in order to correct the errors in the calibration data.

19. The distributed network of claim 13, wherein each of the one or more calibration devices further includes:

a hardware device that performs a testing or calibration procedure on a component;

a software module that interfaces with the hardware device to generate a set of calibration data relating to the response of the component to the testing or calibration procedure performed by the hardware device;

a file configured to receive the calibration data from the software module; and

a data filter that transfers the contents of the file to an external storage source in response to predetermined criteria.

20. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the software module further includes:

at least two different versions of calibration software that perform different calibration procedures and generate data in different formats;

a table correlating each of the different types of components that can be calibrated with the calibration device to a particular version of calibration software.

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21. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the component is inserted into the hardware device by an operator.

22. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the software and hardware device further include means for receiving a message from an external source and displaying the message in a visual format for an operator to view.

23. The distributed network of claim 19, further comprising an archive storage device at which the data filter periodically archives the calibration data.

24. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the file is a flat file that temporarily stores the original calibration data before it is transferred to the data filter.

25. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the file is a circular buffer that temporarily stores the original calibration data before it is transferred to the data filter.

26. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the data filter is an intelligent agent device that is connected to the data link.

27. The distributed network of claim 19, wherein the data filter identifies errors in the calibration data resulting from an operator manually skipping a crucial calibration procedure.

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28. A method of generating calibration data and subsequently detecting and correcting calibration errors within a distributed network, comprising:

an act of performing a testing or calibration procedure on a component such that calibration data is generated from the procedure;

an act of storing the calibration data in a database such that the calibration data is organized in a standard format that can be compared with other calibration data;

a step for identifying errors in the calibration data; and

an act of informing an operator of the relevant errors detected in the calibration data in a time frame such that the operator can re-perform the testing and calibration procedures on the component in a proper manner.

29. The method of claim 28, further including an act of temporarily storing the calibration data in a file in its original format.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the act of performing a testing or calibration procedure on a component is performed by a calibration device comprising:

a hardware device that performs the testing or calibration procedure;

a software module that interfaces with the hardware device to generate the calibration data relating to the response of the component to the testing or calibration procedure performed by the hardware device;

a file configured to receive the calibration data from the software module; and

a data filter that transfers the contents of the file to an external storage source in response to predetermined criteria.

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31. The method of claim 28, wherein the act of storing calibration data in a database in a standard format is performed by a data filter.

32. The method of claim 28, wherein the step for identifying errors in the calibration data further includes:

an act of searching the calibration data for components which have skipped a required testing or calibration procedure; and

an act of comparing the calibration data for each of the components to determine if a particular component is improperly calibrated.

33. The method of claim 28, wherein the act of informing an operator is performed by displaying an alphanumeric message to the operator, including instructions that should be performed to correct the error.

34. The method of claim 28, wherein the act of informing an operator is performed in real time to minimize the amount of repeated mistakes made by the operator and the potential loss of components which are improperly characterized as defective.

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35. A method of generating calibration data and subsequently detecting and correcting calibration errors within a distributed network, comprising:

an act of performing a testing and calibration procedure on a component such that calibration data is generated from the procedure;

an act of storing the calibration data in a database such that the calibration data is organized in a standard format that can be compared with other calibration data;

an act of searching the calibration data for components which have skipped a required testing or calibration procedure;

an act of comparing the calibration data for each of the components to determine if a particular component is improperly calibrated; and

an act of informing an operator of the relevant errors detected in the calibration data in a time frame such that the operator can re-perform the testing or calibration procedure on the component in the proper manner.

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